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[627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[698] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

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692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyet" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with